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house a second wife until his first has had a child or, more usually to-day, until she is pregnant; and he has to avoid his wife to some extent until the baby is weaned, a period of three years or even more.

If a wife is barren, a substitute may, as we have seen, be sent. The whole subject of substitution is too large for adequate treatment here, but some aspects of it may be mentioned. Among the Lovedu a man may marry two sisters in the ordinary course of events, quite irrespective of whether the first married has prematurely died or is barren, but the wife's sister is not specially reserved for the husband as if he had a prior right to her. The marriage is desirable, not enjoined by the society, when it is known that the sisters will co-operate and care for each other's children. In the case of barrenness, there is substitution, but the substitute wife is not a subservient wife. It is not a case of true substitution, but a strengthening of a weak link in the chain of bride and cattle exchanges. A barren wife cannot be discarded; on the contrary, the insistence upon treating her well, though it recognizes, also represses the tendency to regard her position with misgivings. Men make a great effort, by treating a barren wife well, to elicit the praise of others, especially the queen, whose continuous interest is a guarantee that the virtue will be idealized. There are other considerations that reinforce the great concern of a female ruler for peacefulness and good relations. A man who ill-treats his barren wife need expect no reciprocity from her parents, and he has no weapons against them. He cannot demand back his cattle, for failure to have children does not vitiate the cattle exchanges. He cannot even initiate the procedure whereby his parents-in-law will send him a substitute. On the contrary, he must await their pleasure and if they do decide to send a substitute, he must *nyusela* (give cattle), and he may be asked more *munyusalo* than for her sister. But if he has been a good husband and is poor, less may be asked. A man realizes that the virtue of treating a barren wife well is richly rewarded.

Similarly, a husband whose wife has died prematurely without issue is in the same position: he has no right to demand a substitute or, in default, the return of the *munyusalo*. When he is offered his wife's sister or other suitable substitute, he must hand over cattle for her. It is true that the substitute sets up the house that 'has fallen', but the really important point is that the relationship created by the cattle exchanges should be maintained. A husband must report the death of his wife with an ox; he must call her people to the ceremony ending the mourning period; he must continue his visits as son-in-law; he must always be prepared to help his parents-in-law. All this will not necessarily induce them to give him a substitute; and if he neglects these things, the potential right to such substitute is not effaced. On the other hand, his parents-in-law must continue to honour him when he visits, they must still send him beer, they must acknowledge relationship with him. If they do not do these things, if they spread tales that he has been the cause of the death of their daughter, the relationship may be broken; and consequently the claim to a substitute, non-existent before, now is given recognition. If they value the link broken by their conduct they must reforge it by sending a substitute; if they do not, their action has already caused it to snap

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587 768 and the *mayeulo* must be returned. But it is only at the stage where interrelations have become intolerably strained that the widower can demand back his cattle. The law thus is that a man who has lost his wife has no right to demand a substitute; but if it appears that his parents-in-law maliciously refuse to give him one, in circumstances that break the bonds established by the *mayeulo*, he may do so.

Substitutions have to be distinguished from inheritances of spouses, for the latter is not spoken of as marriage at all; it is '*ho khwa*', to hand over or allocate, and implies looking after. Among some of the neighbouring tribes, a man may, on the death of the brother, inherit the wife of his brother, both of his elder or his younger brother. Among the Lovedu the theoretical rule is that only a younger brother may inherit an elder brother's wife; but sometimes, if the parties agree, it is the elder brother who inherits. Among some tribes a man cannot inherit his father's wives, unless they are wives that have not yet actually been married. Among them the supreme vice, the sin that disqualifies even the heir to the throne, is to 'spoil' the wives of their father. Among the Lovedu the two things are not interconnected, and a man may inherit any of his deceased father's wives, if he calls them *mmaei* (little mother), which implies that they are wives junior to his mother. A woman may inherit [588] wives just as she may marry them, especially the widow of her cattle-linked brother, but also the widow of her elder or of her younger brother. There are no rigid rules as regards inheritance of wives; if a man's younger brothers are preferred to his sons and the latter are preferred to the sons of the younger brothers, the actual arrangements are in essence determined by the deceased's cattle-linked sister, who officiates but acts upon the advice of her father's brother or her own brothers and sisters. It is all a matter of agreement. There is no institutionalized method whereby the inherited wives may signify their approval or disapproval, but in practice they are exceedingly independent, almost invariably remain in their own village wherever the man who inherits them may be, and not infrequently become everybody's prey. They sometimes marry wives of their own, which releases them from undue dependence upon their inheritors, who are, however, obliged to assist them in the things that men do. Sometimes their gardens and houses, just as their beer drinks and entertainments, are markedly superior to those of married women; for they are able to accept favours from numerous admirers. And on the whole the lot of a widow is not an unenviable one.

A man cannot inherit his mother's sister, nor can he inherit the wife of a son of his mother's sister. Such arrangements would be incongruous with the *mayeulo* complex, for 'two sisters cannot eat one another's property'. Nor may a father inherit his son's wife; it would upset the hierarchical arrangement of the society. Again, a man cannot inherit his mother's brother's wife, even if she is not the mother of his own wife. It is also curious that the Lovedu do not attach great importance to seed-raising. They speak of 'raising seed to the family' (*ku dzosa mulogo*) when a girl marries at her cattle-linked aunt's, and that is the primary meaning of the phrase. A younger brother who takes his elder brother's widow

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is not primarily conceived of as raising seed; his main duty is to care for her and to maintain intact the *mayeyulo* scheme.

The economic aspect of marriage is more important than the sexual. The duty of a niece to marry at her cattle-linked aunt's is phrased as an economic obligation. A wife has power because she is the provider of food. There are many other sources of the influence of an old woman, both over her son and her son's wife, and they have economic implications. Nagumbi, a man of thirty-five, seemed to bow to his wife's wishes except when she was possessed; yet the wishes of his mother dictated when he should go to town or return home, what land he should plough and when, what medicines or doctors he should get for his baby. The apparent helplessness of women when a stranger calls and asks for information or wishes to do business is not wholly assumed, for theoretically business and politics are the affairs of the men; but often enough it is convenient to defer to the men and to exercise a woman's influence behind the scenes. Thrift and industry are the virtues valued in a wife; it is the hard-working girl who is coveted as a bride. For that reason also, a faithful concubine (*mugundo*) has in practice a high status.

Madume's brother had both a wife and a *mugundo*, and when he died the *mugundo* took all his property for her son. Madume, who denied her right to do this, brought an action and the case eventually came to the capital. The court wholly ignored the issue as to whether a *mugundo* had legal rights. It contented itself with urging the *mugundo* to give Madume control of the assets which had accrued from the work of his brother's son, warning Madume not to press his case. 'Did not the *mugundo* cook and work long for your brother?' it asked. 'And was it not due to her thrift that there are goods? You are wrong to worry her.' Unions with concubines are often stable and economically satisfactory. Quarrels, even jealousies, between a man and his *mugundo* sometimes come before the courts, just as if they were disturbances within a family. Mahale complained, not that his son was living with a *mugundo*, but that the *mugundo*'s laziness had prevented him from giving a beer-drink for a whole year. When the jealousy of the *mugundo* threatened domestic trouble, the queen considered the matter important enough to send a messenger, who, with the district head, came to settle the dispute; the court dealt with the matter exactly as if the parties were married, urging mutual forbearance and co-operation. A man who illicitly lives upon a woman, eating from her porridge bowls (*mudilo*), acquires no rights over her or her children, and is derisively called 'father of the porridge bowls' (*rumudilo*).

Instead of attempting to deal with the conflicts and tangles in *mayeyulo* and marriage, we shall refer to a few of their aspects merely. The conditioning of cross-cousins for their obligations as marital partners does not eliminate temperamental differences, and in modern conditions, which emphasize individual acquisitiveness as against reciprocity, the burden of obligations in the *mayeyulo* ring becomes too heavy. A father, more intent upon the polygynous circle of huts than upon maintaining the chain of *mayeyulo* exchanges, may use the cattle coming in from his daughter's marriage to acquire a wife for himself; and an almost

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ships between the families involved but upon it rests the whole character of the domestic group. Payment of bride-price transfers the reproductive powers of the woman to the husband's agnatic group. The husband has genetricial as well as uxorial rights. Genetricial rights apply not only to any children born after the marriage whoever their biological father might be, but also in retrospect, so that any child born before marriage automatically becomes the child of whoever pays the bride-price, with full rights of succession and inheritance from its sociological father. There is thus, in contrast to other tribes such as the Zulu, no way in which a Lobedu man can obtain the right to his biological child other than by marrying its mother. Emphasis on sociological as opposed to biological fatherhood among the Lobedu is very strong and this is an important factor in Lobedu social structure. The rights of a father to a child involve control over it; the right to the bride-price of a daughter (subject to the right of her brother to marry with his sister's cattle and of her mother to the services of the woman married with her daughter's bride-price); and corresponding to his right to his daughter's bride-price the duty to help his son to marry. A father may and often does marry an additional wife with his daughter's bride-price. A father also has the right to be cared for in his old age by his sons.

The levirate is practised, the junior levirate being more common than the senior levirate. The brother raises seed to the deceased and takes over the responsibility of a father and husband though the children he begets are counted as belonging to his deceased brother. Frequently the heir, eldest son of the chief 'house' inherits a young wife of his father. In this case, similarly, the children born of the union are looked upon as the deceased's, i.e., as brothers and sisters of the heir, not his children. The sororate also is practised in all its forms, sororal polygyny being very common. Where a sister is sent to 'awaken the house (*ho dzusa ndo*)' of a barren or deceased wife full bride-price is due for her although, since bride-price is never an absolutely fixed amount, less may be asked for than in the first marriage.

The marriage of a woman transfers to her husband's group the right to her labour. Initially it is the husband's mother even more than the husband himself that benefits, as we shall

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daughter; (2) his father's mother's brother's daughter; (3) a distant relative of his mother's; (4) his mother's fellow-wife's brother's daughter; (5) a sister to his first wife by the same father but a different mother.

Divorce

The use of a woman's bride-price by her brother, and the interest which his cattle-linked sister has in maintaining this 'house' in which her son will find a wife, made divorce difficult in the old days. Today, however, partly owing to migrant labour, divorce is more common and girls, especially in the case of arranged marriages with old men or cross-cousins, quite frequently run away to a lover either before or after the marriage knowing that they cannot any longer be forced to return. A return of the bride-price is not always insisted upon, as in the case of A who chased away his childless wife for being a thief. Her brother had used the cattle so A was satisfied to accept the arrangement that the brother should give his daughter in marriage to A's son by another wife. When there are complicated cattle claims a husband, especially if he is already old, may find it wiser not to press for a divorce if a wife absconds. P's third wife, who had been procured with the bride-price of the daughter of his first wife ran home with her three children and began to lead a promiscuous life during which a fourth child was born. Beyond trying to persuade her people to make her return, P did nothing. The children, two girls and two boys, were his and his first wife had a claim on the bride-price of one of the girls. Eventually, when the two daughters were married, P secured their bride-price; the two sons earned their own marriage-cattle by working; and when P died, the eldest son of that 'house' was called to come and receive his share of the inheritance.

The rule in Lobedu divorce was, in the old days, that the husband's family should receive back the full bride-price plus all increase, irrespective of where the blame lay, in accordance with the saying, '*masila mobe e boya le sele se hae*—even the bad workman (husband) returns with his tools'. The children went with their mother to her people and when she remarried, the new husband had a right to all of them. With European

given to the son of deceased's youngest wife who had deserted him; two goats were killed for the widow of the deceased's eldest son by his first wife when she came from Johannesburg to pay a visit of condolence. Deceased's field was a *lushu*, a site of their previous village, and as is the custom with such a field, was divided between his wives. His mealies were equally divided between all his wives, his own daughters who were present at the ceremony also receiving some. In the case of Mathekha, all his cattle were given by the *khadi* (his sister) to his eldest son by his chief wife, a man who was a prominent councillor of the queen. It was understood they would be used for helping his brothers and half-brothers to marry. The old man's blankets and money were divided among all his children, the elder ones receiving £1 10s. 0d., the smaller ones only 10s.

The wives of a deceased man if they are still of childbearing age are allocated to his brothers or, in the case of a very young wife, sometimes to the chief son and heir. It is his responsibility to hold the family together after the death of his father. The division of the property is made on the day of purification from mourning (*khitshile*) about a year after the death when all the relatives have gathered together. The person responsible for the division of the inheritance in property and wives is the eldest uterine sister of the deceased who acts in consultation with her sisters, especially the cattle-linked sister of the deceased. If there is no uterine sister the deceased's eldest daughter takes her place. She will act in consultation with her father's brother if one is still alive. In allocating wives some consideration is generally given to the wishes of the parties concerned.

When the heir is a minor, a brother of the deceased, usually the one who inherits the mother of the heir, may be chosen to act as regent. But he must be careful to act only in consultation with the *khadi*. In many instances in the case of the death of a district head when the *khadi* (sister of deceased) is old or a widow and free to leave her husband's homestead she may herself come to rule in her brother's village. When M. died, the son of his chief wife was still a child so his uterine sister, a widow, came to rule, while the younger half-brother of the deceased returned from another area where he had been living to set up his village near by in order to raise seed to his half-brother by the chief wife and help his half-sister by conducting